



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria

02-01-2022

No. 3457

التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"Following Death of Rawnd Alayed, PRC Calls on Germany to Launch Immediate Probe"

- Family of Missing Palestinian Refugee Appeals for Information
- Applications for Return to Yarmouk Camp Resumed
- Residents of Khan Dannun Camp Denounce Poor Services

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Latest Developments

The Palestinian Return Centre in London (PRC) has called on the German authorities to open an immediate investigation into the death of Palestinian refugee girl Rawnd Alayedi, who breathed her last onboard a Greece-bound boat, trying to reach Europe to reunite with her family.

PRC said it has been receiving deeply alarming reports about what the Greek Coast Guard described in a statement as a “gigantic” operation that began on Friday, December 24, after a boat foundered off the island of Paros. Two earlier wrecks occurred farther south in the Aegean, off the islands of Folegandros and Antikythera. One of the wrecks occurred late Tuesday off the island of Folegandros also and left at least three people dead and dozens unaccounted for.

PRC said the accident is the latest in a series of similar tragic incidents at sea that claimed the lives of at least 72 Palestinian refugees fleeing war-torn Syria since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011. Scores of others died of cold on route to EU destinations.

The list of victims includes Rawnd Alayde, a Palestinian-Syrian refugee born on November 21, 1998, and who risked her life onboard the Greek-bound “death boat” wishing to reunite with her family whom she has not seen for over six years after the German authorities turned their back on her appeals for family reunion, forcing her to seek alternative routes.



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According to German and EU laws, adult children are not entitled to family reunification. But they can request family reunification and can be granted under special conditions. When Rawnd's father applied for family reunification she was just over 18.

PRC said authorities could have saved Rawnd's and other refugees' lives had they granted them the right to humanitarian asylum and to family reunion.

The Centre added that the tragedy is the result of the denial of the right to family reunification by German and other EU States which continue to overlook the fact that protection of the family unit is a fundamental human right. Separation of families are of particular concern when they lead to migrant boys and girls being separated from their legal guardians or left unaccompanied. The longer-term separation of families due to migration, in particular when girls, like Rawnd, grow up in a host country without one or both parents, can also have a range of psychological, social and other adverse repercussions.

The human rights watchdog said while EU States have the right to determine the conditions of entry, stay and the status of family members in their territories, EU governments should remember that the importance of family unity and its potential benefits for both migrants and their host communities should form a key part of migration policy considerations in Europe.

PRC called on Germany, the EU and European Parliament to immediately embark on a fact-finding probe to determine the root causes of the Greece boat tragedy and hold those responsible for



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the migrant deaths to account in order to save more lives and help bring such crimes against humanity to a halt.

It said the EU should urgently reconsider its migration policy and family reunion red tape at embassies, migration departments, and consulates in host countries and to work on protecting the lives of migrants, among them hundreds of children, who are the victims of displacement, poverty, and economic marginalization.

Along similar lines, the family of Palestinian refugee Bahaa AlHasan, raised in Deraa Camp, south of Syria, have appealed to search and rescue teams to work on revealing the condition and whereabouts of their relative, who has gone missing since October 11 as he tried to cross the river along the Turkish-Greek borders.

The family lost contact with Bahaa after Greek police forced him, along with other migrants, to swim back to Turkey.

AGPS data indicates that over 333 Palestinian refugees from Syria, including 38 women and girls, have gone missing since the outbreak of the Syrian warfare.

Meanwhile, families in Yarmouk camp have submitted demands for return after the local municipality suspended return applications.

Palestinian lawyer Nour AlDeen Salman said concerned residents should submit their ownership documents to concerned authorities in Street 30. Permits are to be granted in a few days after the demand is submitted.



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Sometime earlier, the rubble-clearance committee in Yarmouk Camp said return permits will be obtained from the municipality instead of security branches.

Palestinian families continue to call on the concerned authorities to allow them a safe return to their homes in Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, and to press ahead with reconstruction projects.

Most of Palestinian families taking shelter south of Damascus fled Yarmouk as a result of the tough blockade imposed by the government troops and also after ISIS grabbed hold of the camp on April 1, 2015.

Scores of other stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018. The Syrian government regained control over the camp and southern Damascus towns following the military operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured. Over 80% of buildings have gone either totally or partially destroyed.

In the meantime, residents of Khan Dannun Camp for Palestinian refugees in Rif Dimashq leveled heavy criticism at the local administrative development committee for turning its back on their appeals for enhancing vital services in the area.

The residents said the water crisis has been ongoing for years across a number of residential neighborhoods forcing civilians to purchase drinking water at exorbitant prices.



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Living conditions in Khan Dannun have sharply deteriorated due to the lack of financial resources and high unemployment rates wrought by the unbridled warfare.

According to UN data, Khan Dannun camp, which lies 23 km south of Damascus, was officially established in 1950-1951 on an area of 0.03 square kilometers. The camp was home to 10,000 Palestine refugees by 2011.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was already one of the poorest camps in Syria. Most refugees worked as farm workers on Syrian-owned lands, others are wage laborers, while a few commuted to industrial plants.

The conflict exerted additional pressures. The camp was surrounded by armed opposition groups and many refugee families displaced from other areas of Damascus took refuge in the camp, tripling the number of residents to some 30,000 during the crisis. Two UNRWA schools premises were converted into collective shelters to give accommodation to more than 130 families between 2012 and 2018. Currently, the camp is home to 12,650 Palestine refugees.

The increase of the camp population has had a negative impact on the camp's infrastructure, affecting the electric network and the sewerage system. The camp suffers from sporadic sewage blockages due to the increased pressure on the existent sewerage system, which was designed for only 10,000 inhabitants, while there are now significantly more. Water supply resources have also



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been affected and the camp suffers from water shortages, especially during the summer months.

Many school children have dropped out or work after school hours to support their families. The camp also suffers from a high incidence of inherited diseases such as thalassaemia and sickle-cell anemia.